

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration of the rejections and further examination are requested. Upon entry of this amendment, the specification is amended, claims 28, 29, 31-33, 36, 40 and 42-52 are amended, leaving claims 28-54 pending with claims 28 and 31 being independent. No new matter has been added.

Title

Applicant notes that the correct title for this application is “Component Feeder” as reflected in Applicants’ June 2, 2005 Preliminary Amendment. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that all of the PTO’s records be updated to reflect this title.

Drawing Objections

The drawings have been objected to because they do not include reference numerals mentioned in the description. Specifically, reference numeral 395c on page 89, line 9 of the specification does not appear in the drawings.

The specification has been amended to delete reference number 395c and therefore Applicants request that this objection be withdrawn.

Specification Objections

The specification has been objected to because of an informality.

The specification has been amended to overcome this objection.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph

Claims 28-30, 42-47, and 51-54 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 28, 42 and 43 have been amended to overcome this rejection.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claim 28 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Tateyama et al. (U.S. 6,152,677).

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. Claim 28 recites component feeder comprising a plate placing device for selectively placing and holding either a wafer feeding plate or a tray feeding plate and allowing a wafer feed components or a tray feed component to be fed from the wafer feeding tray or the component feeding tray, respectively, the plate placing device for placing and holding either the wafer feeding plate or the tray feeding plate so that a feeding height of the wafer feed component on the wafer feeding plate and a feeding height of the tray feed component on the tray feeding plate are approximately equal to each other.

Applicants submit that the cited prior art fails to disclose or render obvious such a component feeder. The Examiner suggests that "Tateyama teaches a component feeder (substrate transfer apparatus 2) with a plate placing device (arms 21) that is capable of selectively placing and holding either plate (unprocessed substrate or processed substrate)... Tateyama's plate placing device is capable of placing and holding a plate (W) so that the feed height of the two types of plates (unprocessed substrate or processed substrate) are approximately equal."

Applicants submit that Tateyama merely relates to an apparatus and method of transferring substrates, such as semiconductor wafers or LCD (Liquid-Crystal Display) glass substrates, between the cassette and the processing section (cleaning section). *See* column 1 lines 5-8. Furthermore, the unprocessed substrate is identical to the processed substrate, and has been only cleaned in the processing section. That is, Tateyama only discloses that the arms 21 hold a single type of substrate, in an unprocessed state and a processed state.

In contrast, in the present invention as defined in independent claim 28, it is clear that the wafer feeding plate is different from the tray feeding plate. That is, the wafer feed components are placed on the wafer feeding plate, and the tray feed components are placed on the tray feeding plate. *See* Figs. 4 and 5. Therefore, it is clear that Tateyama does not relate to a component feeder, and does not disclose the plate placing device for selectively placing and holding different types of plates (e.g., the wafer feeding plate and tray feeding plate).

Additionally, there is no reasoning in the prior art to modify Tateyama such that it would have rendered independent claim 28 obvious.

Therefore, Tateyama fails to disclose or render obvious independent claim 28 or its dependent claims.

Moreover, each of the dependent claims further distinguishes itself over the cited prior art. For example, Tateyama discloses that the arm has a first support member for supporting the unprocessed substrate only and a second support member for supporting the processed substrate only. That is, in the Tateyama device, each type of substrate is supported by different support members.

In contrast, in the present invention as related in claim 29, different types of plates (e.g., the wafer feeding plate and tray feeding plate) are supported by same support member (i.e., the elastic support member). Consequently, Tateyama fails to disclose or render obvious this element of claim 29.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 29-32, 36 and 48 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Tateyama in view of Moore (U.S. 3,766,638).

Claims 29 and 30 are allowable for the reasons set forth above, since each of these claims is dependent from claim 28 and Moore fails to overcome the deficiencies of Tateyama.

Independent claim 31 and its dependent claims are allowable for similar reasons to those set forth above. Namely, claim 31 recites a component feeder comprising a plate receiving part for receiving a plurality of wafer feeding plates and a plurality of tray feeding plates while allowing the plates to be discharged, a plate placing device for selectively placing and holding a selected plate of either the wafer feeding plates or the tray feeding plates and allowing the wafer feed component or the tray feed component to be fed from the wafer or the component feeding tray, respectively; and a plate moving device for releasably holding the selected plate, discharging the selected plate from the plate receiving part, and moving the selected plate while allowing the selected plate to be held by the plate placing device.

The combination of Tateyama in view of Moore fails to render such a device obvious.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the indication that claims 33-35, 37-41, 49 and 50 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Additionally, Applicants appreciate the indication that claims 42-47 and 51-54 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as set forth above and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, all of the claims now pending in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action are respectfully solicited.

Should the Examiner believe there are any remaining issues that must be resolved before this application can be allowed, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the undersigned by telephone in order to resolve such issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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